

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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P R 122045Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6540

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

LIMITED OFFICIAL UYK LONDON 16284

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK, PINT

SUBJECT: GORMLEY SAVES THE DAY FOR THE NUM MODERATES;

ALLOWING THE GOVERNMENT TO BREATHE A LITTLE EASIER

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: JOE GORMLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS, HURRIED FROM A SICKBED, WHERE HE WAS SUFFERING FROM INFLUENZA, TO OVERTURN A CRITICAL RULING BY THE COMMUNIST VICE-PRESIDENT, MICK MCGAHEY,

WHICH COULD HAVE LED TO A MAJOR CONFRONTATION IN THE
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MINING INDUSTRY THIS WINTER. END SUMMARY

2. THE EXECUTIVE MEETING, WHICH WAS CHAIRED BY MCGAHEY IN GORMLEY'S ABSENCE, HAD EARLIER VOTED 14-12 TO REJECT A DECISION OF A SMALL NUM NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE CALLING FOR A 30 POUND WAGE INCREASE -- WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN WAY OUTSIDE THE SOCIAL CONTRACT AND COULD HAVE MARKED "PAID" TO THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-INFLATION POLICY IF IT WERE PRESSED. HOWEVER, MCGAHEY HAD RULED THAT THE 14-12 VOTE WAS OUT OF ORDER. THESE FOURTEEN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS STORMED OUT OF THE MEETING AND THERE WERE REPORTEDLY CRIES OF "DICTATOR" RINGING IN MCGAHEY'S EARS. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE "14" TELEPHONED GORMLEY, WHO RUSHED TO THE NUM'S LONDON HEADQUARTERS.

3. REASSERTING HIMSELF AS PRESIDENT, GORMLEY REINSTATED THE 14-12 REJECTION OF THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE VOTE BY RULING IT IN ORDER. THE MCGAHEY FORCES THEN INTRODUCED A NO-CONFIDENCE VOTE AGAINST GORMLEY WHICH WAS DEFEATED, AND THE HAGGARD NUM PRESIDENT RETURNED TO HIS SICKBED.

4. THE DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE MEANS THAT THE MINERS WILL SEEK A "SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE" AS DIRECTED BY THE NUM CONGRESS LAST JULY, RATHER THAN THE FIXED SUM OF 30 POUNDS. IN PRACTICAL TERMS IT MEANS THAT THE EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT COULD BE CLOSER TO THE SOCIAL CONTRACT'S GUIDELINES.

5. COMMENT: OF COURSE NOTHING IS CERTAIN IN THAT VOLATILE UNION, BUT THERE IS NOW A MUCH BETTER CHANCE FOR PEACE IN THE COAL FIELDS THIS WINTER. IT IS CLEARLY A VICTORY FOR MODERATION AND A DRAMATIC VICTORY FOR JOE GORMLEY, WHOSE IMAGE HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY TARNISHED RECENTLY. MOREOVER, IT REFLECTS A VICTORY FOR THE TUC LEADERSHIP WHICH HAD CAUTIONED THE MINERS AGAINST EXCEEDING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT AND FOR MICHAEL FOOT, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT, WHO MADE A SPECIAL TELEVISED APPEAL TO THE MINERS LAST NIGHT (DECEMBER 11) CALLING UPON THEM TO MODERATE THEIR DEMANDS.

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